



Department of
Toxic Substances
Control

*The Mission of the
Department of
Toxic Substances
Control is to
provide the highest
level of safety, and
to protect public
health and the
environment from
toxic harm.*



State of California



California
Environmental
Protection Agency

Fact Sheet, March 2008

Vandenberg Air Force Base Requests Renewal of Facility Permit for Explosive Ordnance Disposal Range

The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) invites you to comment on a proposed Hazardous Waste Facility Permit renewal for the **Explosive Ordnance Disposal Range** (EOD Range) at Vandenberg Air Force Base (VAFB). VAFB is a military and aerospace facility located on California's central coast, three miles north of Lompoc in Santa Barbara County.



In addition to the draft Permit, DTSC also proposes to issue a Negative Declaration under California Environment Quality Act (CEQA) which is available for public comment and review.

We invite you to attend and participate in a public meeting to provide you additional information and answer your questions. A public meeting is a process for DTSC to receive comments from the community on the Draft Permit and CEQA – Draft Negative Declaration document.

Please note: A glossary to define bolded technical terms has been included on page 4 of this fact sheet.

Public Comment Period and Meeting

The 45-day public comment period for the Draft Permit and Draft Negative Declaration begins on **March 12** and ends on **April 25, 2008**. Copies of the Draft Permit, Draft Negative Declaration and supporting documents can be viewed at the information repositories listed on page 3 in this fact sheet. Written and e-mailed comments must be postmarked by **April 25, 2008**, and sent to:

Mr. Mike Eshaghian, DTSC Project Manager
9211 Oakdale Avenue
Chatsworth, California 91311

Please e-mail comments to: Meshaghi@dtsc.ca.gov

Public Meeting: Thursday, **April 10, 2008** at 6 p.m.

DTSC will hold a Public Meeting on **April 10** at the Lompoc Council Chamber, 100 Civic Center Plaza in Lompoc (805-736-1261) to explain the Draft Permit and Draft CEQA Negative Declaration, address your questions, and accept your verbal and written comments.

For information on accessibility or to request reasonable accommodations, please contact Ms. Kim Rhodes toll-free at 1-866- 495-5651 or 916- 255-3651 or by e-mail to Krhodes1@dtsc.ca.gov no later than **April 1, 2008**.

The proposed permit renewal allows VAFB to continue to operate the existing EOD Range located on the Air Force Base property. The EOD Range receives onsite unexploded **propellant**, explosive, and pyrotechnic materials. The draft permit and supporting documents define the permitted activities at the VAFB Hazardous Waste Facility under the federal **Resource Conservation and Recovery Act**. The EOD Range is a permitted Hazardous Waste Facility under DTSC's oversight.

This Permit specifies:

- A maximum of 250 pounds of cased (fragment-producing) explosive, or
- 500 pounds uncased explosive per detonation, or
- 1,500 pounds of explosive per month, or 8,000 pounds of explosive per year.

Why a Permit is Necessary

DTSC regulates the generation, storage, treatment and disposal of hazardous waste in California. A permit enables DTSC to effectively regulate the hazardous waste management activities at facilities. Permits are developed after DTSC's detailed technical review, and are intended to ensure that the facility operates in a manner that protects human health and the environment.

Vandenberg Base Background

VAFB covers more than 98,400 acres (154 square miles), along 35 miles of Santa Barbara County coastline.

The base chronology:

- 1941 - Camp Cooke Army Base established on site
- 1956 - Camp Cooke site chosen as first U.S. Air Force missile base.
- 1957 - Base is split. North transferred to the Air Force as Cooke Air Force Base.
- Southern portion assigned to the Navy as Point Arguello Naval Missile Facility
- 1958 - Base name changed to Vandenberg Air Force Base
- 1965 - Naval missile facility transferred to the Air Force



The first missile was launched from VAFB in December 1958. Since then, more than 1,700 intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and polar-orbiting satellites have been launched from VAFB. Currently, VAFB is the only U.S. military installation that actively launches ICBMs and polar-orbiting satellites. As a result of its operations, the base has military munitions waste materials including obsolete ordnance, explosive waste from training operations, materials with an expired shelf life, or explosive waste discovered on the base.

Facility Features and Safety Measures During Detonation

The EOD Range is located west of the airfield runways on the northern portion of VAFB. The EOD Range has 2,500-foot diameter circular boundary, and is approximately one mile west of the intersection of Mira and Tangair Roads. Its relatively remote location and proximity to the coast offers an excellent location to safely conduct detonations. Every batch of pyrotechnic materials that is detonated is carefully prepared by highly trained EOD specialists, consistent with the Department of Defense ordnance disposal technical orders.

The EOD Range is unfenced, but warning signs are posted at approximately 300-foot intervals along the perimeter and at the entrance to the EOD Range. The detonation area is a graded area that is largely free of vegetation.

The materials are detonated in an open area at the EOD Range which has been used for this purpose

since 1945. Detonations are conducted on the ground at a point approximately in the center of the graded area. The explosives are placed such that the force of the explosion is downward into the item being destroyed and into the ground. Generally, the only material thrown upward by the explosions is soil. These explosions create small craters (approximately 2 feet across and 1 foot deep) in the ground. The craters are filled in during re-grading activities, two or three times per year.

Explosive safety requirements established by Department of Defense agencies are followed during disposal activities. EOD Range operations dictate that no explosives, other than those being disposed, are located on the site during the disposal activity.

Corrective Action

As a result of past disposal practices at VAFB, some environmental contamination occurred. Soil and groundwater investigations were initiated at VAFB in 1985 under the Department of Defense Installation Restoration Program to locate potentially contaminated sites on VAFB.

In August 1991, VAFB signed a Federal Facility Site Remediation Agreement with the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, and DTSC. This agreement regulates cleanup operations of the contaminated sites. These activities will be conducted under the federal agreement and overseen by DTSC's Office of Military Facilities Branch.

Permit History

The Hazardous Waste Facility Permit for the EOD Range and drum storage Building 3300 was issued on May 6, 1996 with an effective date of June 13, 1996. This permit was modified on September 20, 2001 to address closure of the waste storage unit, Building 3300, and the changes to the facility's Closure Plan.

Since VAFB submitted a permit renewal request in a timely manner, VAFB is allowed to operate under the expired permit until DTSC makes a final decision on the permit renewal application.

California Environmental Quality Act – Negative Declaration

DTSC evaluated any possible environmental impacts associated with the proposed operation of this facility, as required by the CEQA. DTSC has prepared a Draft Negative Declaration which states that the hazardous waste facility would not have significant impacts to human health and the environment. This document is available for public review and comment, along with other supporting documents in the listed information repositories.

Where to Find the Documents

The VAFB Draft Permit, Draft CEQA Negative Declaration, permit application, and other documents related to the site are available for review at the following locations:

Lompoc Public Library

501 E. North Avenue
Lompoc, California 93436
Hours: Mon – Thurs 12 p.m.-8 p.m.
Fri – Sun 12 p.m.-6 p.m.

Vandenberg Village Library

3755 Constellation Road
Lompoc, California 93436
Hours: Sun - Mon Closed
Tues - Wed 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
Thurs – Sat 1 p.m.-6 p.m.

Vandenberg Air Force Base Library (for on-base staff)

Building 10343 Community Loop
Vandenberg AFB, California 93437
Hours: Mon – Fri 8 a.m.-5 p.m.
Sat – Sun Closed

DTSC Regional Records Room

9211 Oakdale Avenue
Chatsworth, California 91311
Hours: Mon – Fri 8 a.m.-5 p.m.
Please call for an appointment: (818) 717-6521

To view **electronic versions** of the draft Permit, draft CEQA Negative Declaration and other related documents, please visit our DTSC's EnviroStor website: <http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/>. Enter "Vandenberg" as the City and select Vandenberg AFB. Click on the link for "Report" and then on the button for "Community Involvement."

For More Information Contact

Please contact any of the following individuals with any questions or concerns you may have regarding the Draft Permit or Draft CEQA Negative Declaration:

For questions regarding the Draft Permit renewal and Draft CEQA Negative Declaration, please contact:

Mr. Mike Eshaghian, DTSC Project Manager
(818) 717-6679 or by e-mail to
Meshaghi@dtsc.ca.gov

For questions regarding the public participation process, please contact:

Ms. Kim Rhodes, Public Participation Specialist
Toll-free 1 (866) 495-5651 or (916) 255-3651
or by e-mail to Krhodes1@dtsc.ca.gov

For questions from the media, please contact
Ms. Jeanne Garcia, Public Information Officer
(818) 717-6573 or by e-mail to
Jgarcia1@dtsc.ca.gov

Notice to Hearing Impaired Individuals

You can obtain additional information by using the California State Relay Service at: 1 (888) 877-5378 (TDD). Ask them to contact Ms. Kim Rhodes at (916) 255-3651.

Glossary

Propellant: A reactive, energetic material formulated to deflagrate producing instantaneous energy sufficient to propel an object, such as a bullet, projectile, torpedo, rocket, or missile.

Explosive Ordnance: Any chemical compound, mixture, or device whose primary purpose is to function by detonation or deflagration with instantaneous release of heat and gases. Explosive Ordnance includes such applications as illumination, signaling, catapulting personnel or material, mining, cutting, and demolition.

Pyrotechnic: A reactive, energetic material that undergoes reaction to produce audible or visible effects, such as illumination, colored lights, smoke, or noise.

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act: A Federal statute which regulates facilities that treat, store or dispose of hazardous waste.

Would you like to be added or removed from the Vandenberg Air Force Base Mailing list?

If you would like to be added or removed from the mailing list for Vandenberg AFB, please complete the information below and return to Ms. Kim Rhodes, 8800 Cal Center Drive, Sacramento, CA 95826.

You can also e-mail your request to be added or removed from the mailing list by sending a message to Krhodes1@dtsc.ca.gov.

☐ Please **remove** my name from the mailing list

☐ Please **add** my name to the mailing list

Name: _____

Address: City/State/Zip: _____

Note: While the mailing list is solely for DTSC use, the list is considered a public record.